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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m., and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Come and find the quiet center
In the crowded life we lead,
Find the room for hope to enter,
Find the frame where we are freed;
Clear the chaos and the clutter,
Clear our eyes, that we may see
All the things that really matter
Be at peace and simply be

—Hymn "Come Find the Quiet Center" by Shirley Erena Murray.

Father, thank You for this sacred moment of prayer. We come to You just as we are and receive from You the strength to do what You want us to do. We trust You to guide us throughout this day. Keep us calm in the quiet center of our lives so that we may be serene in the swirling stresses of life. Fill us with Your perfect peace that comes from staying our minds on You. In the name of the Prince of Peace. Amen.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able majority leader, Senator DOLE, is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, the time between now and 10 o'clock will be equally divided prior to a cloture vote at 10 a.m. on H.R. 2937, the White House Travel Office legislation. If cloture is not invoked at 10 o'clock, it may be possible to consider any of the following items: Gas tax legislation, taxpayer bill of rights, minimum wage legislation, and TEAM Act. We hope to have some resolution of these matters today.

I again say it is rather ironic that we are prepared to accept the minimum

wage proposal offered by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. We are prepared to repeal the gas tax that my colleagues on both sides of the aisle would like to repeal, the Clinton gas tax which was not for highways or bridges or roads, but for deficit reduction, and was part of the larger \$268 billion tax increase in 1993, the largest tax increase in the history of the world, let alone America. We do not understand why our colleagues, who I think want to do those things, would be holding it up because of one little amendment we offered called the TEAM Act, which simply says employees can talk to employers.

This is America. But of course the labor bosses, who put \$35 million, just lately, into the pot on the other side of the aisle, said we do not like that. So when the labor bosses speak, our colleagues on the other side say yes—yes, sir.

So if we are going to let the labor bosses dictate repeal of the gas tax, the increase in the minimum wage because they dislike one provision that simply says that employees can talk to employers, then I think it is a rather sad state of affairs. We hope to debate that at length today, because I believe the American people, once they understand this issue, will be on the right side.

If some employee has a good idea on productivity or whatever it may be, why can that employee not talk to management? Because since 1992 the NLRB says you cannot do that. We are simply trying to change the law. We think it is good policy. We think it makes a lot of good, common sense. We believe it improves the working relationship in the workplace. For all the reasons I can think of, we hope to be able to persuade our colleagues on the other side that this is a package that should pass this Senate by 100 to 0.

Perhaps they are waiting for the liberal media to put their spin on it, but it is pretty hard to even put—they do

not have a spin. Even the liberal media, who wait for the Democrats' spin and then print it almost verbatim on a daily basis around here, find it very difficult. Because we are going to accept their package on minimum wage, our package on gas tax repeal. Then we had TEAM Act and we are ready to vote, after an hour debate on each side. We have even provide they can have a separate vote on minimum wage and a separate vote on TEAM Act.

Some may not want to vote for the minimum wage increase so we provide for that. Some may not want to vote for TEAM Act, so we provide for that. So we have gone not only the extra mile, but miles and miles beyond.

We hope there could be some resolution of this today. If not, we will take our case to the American people and we will continue the debate throughout today and tomorrow and Friday. Hopefully, sooner or later, our colleagues will recognize this is a very fair and very reasonable proposal we have made and it should have unanimous support in the Senate.

Mr. GRAMS addressed the Chair.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. INHOFE). If the Senator from Minnesota will suspend for a moment, under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

WHITE HOUSE TRAVEL OFFICE LEGISLATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration of H.R. 2937 which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2937) for the reimbursement of attorney fees and costs incurred by former

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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